

## THE DATE OF THE NARTHEX MOSAICS OF THE CHURCH OF THE DORMITION AT NICAËA\*

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THE chronology of the Byzantine mosaic ensembles of the eleventh century, the "classical age" of Byzantine mosaic decoration, is as yet somewhat imprecise. A fixed point is provided by Nea Moni, dated on the basis of reliable documentary evidence to the reign of Constantine IX (1042–56). The dating of the mosaics of St. Sophia at Kiev, after oscillating between 1017 and 1067, appears to have come to rest *ca.* 1045 in the light of recent investigations.<sup>1</sup> The decorations of Hosios Lukas and Daphni are undated, and although the consensus of opinion places the former in the early part of the century and the latter towards the end of it, voices are occasionally raised to contest this conclusion.<sup>2</sup> This dearth of exact dates confers particular importance on the narthex mosaics of the church of the Dormition (Koimesis) at Nicaea which are commonly assigned to 1025–28, and consequently regarded as the first link in the series of eleventh-century mosaic decorations. It is the purpose of this paper to show that this date is unfounded, and that the Nicaea mosaics were probably made shortly after 1065.

Since the church of the Dormition was completely destroyed in 1922,<sup>3</sup> our discussion

must be based on the publications of Diehl, O. Wulff, and Th. Schmit, and in particular on the photographs and architectural drawings accompanying Schmit's monograph which were executed in May–July 1912 by N. K. Kluge.<sup>4</sup> It is a matter of general agreement that the mosaics of the church fell into two groups: those of the conch and bema arch were manifestly of an early date, while those of the narthex, as well as two mosaic "icons" on the piers of the nave unquestionably belonged to the middle-Byzantine period. The date of the apse mosaics, especially of the four angels in the bema arch, has been the subject of heated debate among scholars, but may now be regarded as definitely settled, thanks to P. A. Underwood's paper in this volume. The great importance of these early mosaics, their high artistic quality, the profound theological conception of the apse decoration—all these factors have to some extent deflected attention from the rather more usual mosaics of the narthex, with the result that the date 1025–28, first proposed for them by Diehl in 1892, has never been subjected to a thorough examination, although Diehl himself, as we shall see, later changed his mind in this respect.

The reader may be reminded that the mosaic decoration of the narthex was limited to the central bay, namely to a domical vault and to the lunette over the door leading into the nave (fig. 1). In the lunette was a half-length figure of the Virgin orans (fig. 2); in the summit of the vault an eight-armed cross within a circle, surrounded by four medallions

\* Figs. 1, 4, 10, 11, and 14 are reproduced from photographs in the A. Kingsley Porter Collection, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, which derive from the Staatliche Bildstelle, Berlin. I should like to thank Miss K. B. Taylor, Assistant Librarian in the Fogg Museum, for supplying me these photographs. Figs. 11 and 14 have appeared in Th. Schmit's publication (see note 4).

<sup>1</sup> V. N. Lazarev, "Novye dannye o mozaikach i freskach Sofii Kievskoj," *Vizant. Vremennik*, X (1956), 164.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Lazarev, *Istorija vizantijskoj živopisi*, I (Moscow, 1947), 321, note 55, expresses the view that the mosaics of Daphni should be placed towards the middle of the eleventh century.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Comptes-rendus, Acad. des Inscr. et Belles-Lettres* (1921), 352–3; *BZ*, XXV (1925), 267–9.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Diehl, "Mosaïques byzantines de Nicée," *BZ*, I (1892), 74–85, 525–6; reprinted with corrections in *Etudes byzantines* (Paris, 1905), 353–69; O. Wulff, "Architektura i mozaiki chrama Uspenija Bogorodicy v Nikee," *Vizant. Vremennik*, VII (1900), 315–425; *id.*, *Die Koimesiskirche in Nicäa und ihre Mosaiken* (Strasbourg, 1903); Th. Schmit, *Die Koimesis-Kirche von Nikaia* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1927).

containing the busts of Christ, St. John the Baptist, Joachim, and Anna; and in the four pendentives of the vault the four Evangelists seated at their desks. The date of this decoration depends on two inscriptions. The first, in mosaic (text figure), ran along the rim of

protovestiarus, the third, Symeon, became drungarius of the watch. All three received, furthermore, the important title of proedros. Another eunuch, Eustathius, was promoted to grand hetairiarch. Later on, Nicephorus retired to the Bucellarian theme in central



the lunette containing the figure of the orant Virgin, and was conceived as follows: Κ<ύρι>ε βοήθη (sic) τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Νικηφόρῳ πατρικίῳ πραιποσίτῳ βέστη καὶ μεγάλῳ ἐταιριάρχῃ. This inscription had been read almost correctly by Texier<sup>5</sup> and reproduced in *CIG*, 8903. Diehl, however, in his 1892 article, misread the words πατρικίῳ πραιποσίτῳ βέστη as πατρικίῳ καὶ πρωτοβέστη, and chided Texier for having given what was actually the true reading.<sup>6</sup> This mistake, which Diehl himself later corrected,<sup>7</sup> was to have unfortunate consequences. Under the influence of his earlier reading, Diehl tentatively identified the Nicephorus of the inscription with a Nicephorus who, in 1025, was elevated by Constantine VIII to the rank of protovestiarus.<sup>8</sup> This identification was accepted by Wulff<sup>9</sup> because the second inscription, which we shall presently discuss, mentioned an emperor Constantine; Schmit and other scholars<sup>10</sup> followed suit.

Let us, however, look more closely at the evidence. Cedrenus<sup>11</sup> tells us that upon his accession Constantine VIII conferred high rank on the eunuchs of his entourage: his highest ranking chamberlain, Nicholas, was made domestic of the schools and parakoimomenos; the second, Nicephorus, was made

Asia Minor, and barely saved his life when that region was devastated by earthquake in 1035, whereupon he became a monk at the monastery of Studius at Constantinople.<sup>12</sup> It is evident that this Nicephorus could not have been the dignitary who commissioned the Nicene inscription, since their respective titles were entirely different. The office of protovestiarus, the second most important in the hierarchy of eunuchs (after that of parakoimomenos) was quite distinct from that of vestēs, which was created in the tenth century and was apparently a purely honorary one.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, had the Nicephorus of Nicaea held the exalted rank of proedros, it is inconceivable that he should not have recorded it in his dedicatory inscription.<sup>14</sup> There is no reason to suppose, as Diehl has done, that the proedros Nicephorus succeeded Eustathius in the charge of grand hetairiarch; on the contrary, the appointment of Eustathius to that office makes it unlikely that any other person held it in the brief reign of Constantine VIII.

I must admit that unfortunately I have not been able to identify the patrician, praepositus, vestēs, and grand hetairiarch

<sup>5</sup> *Description de l'Asie Mineure*, I (Paris, 1839), 51.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, 83.

<sup>7</sup> *Etudes byzantines*, 366.

<sup>8</sup> Cedrenus, ed. Bonn, II, 480.

<sup>9</sup> "Architektura i mozaiki," 421; *Die Koisiskirche*, 303.

<sup>10</sup> So G. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine*, III (Paris, 1905), 7, note 1; O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911), 389; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst*, II (Berlin, 1918), 558; E. Diez and O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 112; Lazarev, *Istorija vizantijskoj živopisi*, I, 90.

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Cedrenus, II, 514. Cf. R. Guiland, "Les eunuques dans l'Empire byzantin," *Etudes byzantines*, I (1943), 204.

<sup>13</sup> On these titles see J. Ebersolt, "Fonctions et dignités du Vestiarium byzantin," *Mélanges Ch. Diehl*, I (Paris, 1930), 84 sq.

<sup>14</sup> The rank of proedros was created in 963 by Nicephorus Phocas who made it the highest in the senatorial hierarchy. Originally it was conferred on only one person. In 1025, as we have seen, there were three proedroi. In the second half of the eleventh century this rank became much more common. See Ch. Diehl, "De la signification du titre de 'proèdre' à Byzance," *Mélanges G. Schlumberger*, I (Paris, 1924), 105-17.

Nicephorus.<sup>15</sup> Of his titles, the only one that could lead to an identification is that of grand hetairiarch, or captain of the emperor's personal guard, since the others were quite common, as was the name Nicephorus. Only a few hetairiarchs of the eleventh century are, however, known to us. In addition to Eustathius already mentioned, we find the following in the narrative sources: the eunuch Constantine, appointed in 1045 commander-in-chief of operations in Armenia,<sup>16</sup> and later commander of the Byzantine army at the disastrous battle of Adrianople in 1050;<sup>17</sup> David, a supporter of the infamous logothete Nikephoritzes, minister of Michael VII (1071-78);<sup>18</sup> under Nicephorus III (1078-81) we find Romanus Straboromanos,<sup>19</sup> under Alexius I (1081-1118), Argyros Karatzas<sup>20</sup> and Manuel Straboromanos.<sup>21</sup> The numerous extant seals of grand hetairiarchs, among them one bearing the name of Nicephorus, which Schlumberger dates in the tenth or eleventh century,<sup>22</sup> cannot unfortunately be used to determine the chronology of these officials.

The second inscription, consisting of two iambic quatrains, accompanied a mosaic that was apparently over the door leading from the narthex into the south aisle. The mosaic represented the Virgin and Child flanked by an emperor and a Byzantine official. It was seen in 1804 by J. von Hammer, who copied the inscription in the following garbled manner:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Professor R. Guiland has kindly informed me that he too had found no mention of this Nicephorus in Byzantine texts. On the office of the hetairiarch see his remarks in *Byzantinoslavica*, XIX (1958), 68 sq.

<sup>16</sup> Cedrenus, II, 560-1. Cf. René Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie* (Paris, 1947), 583.

<sup>17</sup> Cedrenus, II, 600 sq.; Attaliates, ed. Bonn, 33-4. Cf. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine*, III, 583 sq.

<sup>18</sup> Attaliates, 271; Cedrenus, II, 734. David's seal has been published by Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), 348.

<sup>19</sup> Attaliates, 286; Cedrenus, II, 735-6; Anna Comnena, II, 5. 5-7; Zonaras, ed. Bonn, III, 726.

<sup>20</sup> Anna Comnena, VIII, 7. 4.

<sup>21</sup> His correspondence with Alexius I is preserved in Cod. Coislin 136. See R. Devreesse, *Le fonds Coislin* (Paris, 1945), 128.

<sup>22</sup> *Sigillographie*, 348, no. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Umblick auf einer Reise von Constantinopel nach Brussa* (Pesth, 1818), 112, 189-90.

## I

ΑΝΑΞΚΡΑΤΑΙΟΣ  
ΔΕΣΠΟΤΙΣΚΟΝΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ  
ΜΟΝΗΝΠΡΟΝΟΙΑΣΑΖΗ  
ΤΗΝΕΝΘΑΔΕ  
ΔΩΡΟΝΔΙΔΟΣΙΝΘΥ  
ΚΛΕΘΙΠΑΤΡΙΚΙΩ  
ΒΟΥΛΙΤΗΙΟΚΥΡΟΣΕΝ  
ΠΕΔΩ

## II

ΕΓΩΔΕΚΑΙΔΕΣΠΟΙ  
ΝΑΝΕΙΔΙΑΚΙΟΝΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝ  
ΚΑΙΤΟΝΒΩΜΩΝΑΡΧΗ  
ΓΟΝΕΝΕΘΗΝΗΜΟΙΝΑΥΤΟΙΝ  
ΩΣΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΔΕΚΥΡΙ  
ΑΤΗΣ ΟΙΚΙΑΣ  
ΕΓΡΑΨΑΤΟΑΜΜΩΝΝΙ  
ΚΗΦΟΡΟΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΕΙΟΥ

This was reproduced in *CIG*,<sup>24</sup> where an attempt, largely unsuccessful, was made to emend it. The mosaic itself was seen again in 1813 by J. Macdonald Kinneir,<sup>25</sup> in 1825 by A. Prokesch von Osten,<sup>26</sup> and in 1849 by A. Murav'ev,<sup>27</sup> but it disappeared some time before 1892.<sup>28</sup> In 1834, however, while the church was undergoing restoration, a painted copy of this mosaic, which was then in a somewhat damaged condition, was made on the south wall of the narthex over the door leading into the adjoining square room (figs. 3 and 4). The original inscription was, fortunately, reproduced on the copy and recorded by Wulff.<sup>29</sup> Beside the emperor's figure was written:

ἄναξ κραταῖος δεσπότης Κωνσταντῖνος  
μονὴν προνοίας ἀξιῶν τὴν ἐνθάδε  
δῶρον δίδωσιν εὐκλεεῖ πατρικίῳ

<sup>24</sup> Nos. 8782-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Journey through Asia Minor, Armenia and Koordistan in the Years 1813 and 1814* (London, 1818), 26.

<sup>26</sup> *Denkwürdigkeiten und Erinnerungen aus dem Orient*, III (Stuttgart, 1837), 120.

<sup>27</sup> *Pis'ma s Vostoka*, I (St. Petersburg, 1851), 98-9.

<sup>28</sup> See Colmar v. d. Goltz, *Anatolische Ausflüge* (Berlin, 1896), 440-1.

<sup>29</sup> The photograph reproduced in figure 4 (taken in 1912?) shows that in the early years of this century the entire narthex, including the composition that concerns us, was repainted and the inscription apparently obliterated.

Next to the nobleman's figure it said:

ἐγὼ σε καὶ δέσποινα <ν> οἶδα κτισμάτων  
καὶ τῶν ἐμῶν ἀρχηγὸν ἐνθυμημάτων  
ὥς δεσπότην δὲ κυρίαν τῆς οἰκίας  
ἐγράψα ΤΟΔ' ΜΩΝ Νικηφόρος παρθένε.

As Wulff was quick to realize, this inscription had the same wording as that on the mosaic which Hammer recorded. What is more, the Greek painter of 1834 has given us an intelligible and, probably, a faithful copy of the text which lacks only the last verse of the first stanza. It is likely that this line had been either destroyed or otherwise rendered illegible between 1804 and 1834.

The double inscription may be rendered as follows: "The mighty lord, the Emperor Constantine, deeming this monastery worthy of support, gives it as a gift to the glorious patrician...."<sup>30</sup> The second stanza, which in Byzantine terminology would have been called στίχοι ὡς ἐκ προσώπου, was an address to the Virgin on the part of the patrician: "I acknowledge thee both as lady of my buildings and as leader of my thoughts; it is, however, as the lady and mistress of this house<sup>31</sup> that I, Nicephorus, have represented thee, O Virgin."<sup>32</sup>

These two stanzas provide the important information that the patrician Nicephorus had received the monastery as a donation from an emperor called Constantine, and that he had initiated some building activity in it. Attention should be drawn to the expression προνοίας ἀξιῶν. There can be no doubt that the word *pronoia* is used here not just in its usual sense of "providence," "care," "solicitude," but as a technical term. In his detailed

study of the *pronoia*-system, Ostrogorsky has established that this term occurs for the first time in the reign of Constantine IX (1042–55) concerning the donation of the Mangana (a region of Constantinople) to Constantine Lichoudes.<sup>33</sup> In this case it is not clear whether the property consisted in the monastery of St. George of the Mangana, founded by Constantine IX who surrounded it with various dependent buildings, or in the imperial domain of the Mangana. In any case, it is generally admitted that the institution of the *pronoia* resembled in its initial stage, i.e. before the Comnenian dynasty, that of the *charistikion* (grants of ecclesiastical property to individual persons), and that no fast distinction was made at that time between these two terms. In the reign of Michael VII (1071–78) *pronoia* grants were sold in great numbers by the logothete Nikephoritzes,<sup>34</sup> who, it may be noted, had also held an influential place at court in the reign of Constantine X.<sup>35</sup>

Who then was the Emperor Constantine mentioned in the inscription? In the eleventh century this name was borne by three emperors, Constantine VIII (1025–28), Constantine IX (1042–55) and Constantine X (1059–67). The first of these should most probably be eliminated since, as we have seen, the office of grand hetairiarch was held during his brief reign by Eustathius; furthermore, the use of the term *pronoia* suggests a somewhat later date. Thus we are left to choose between Constantine IX, in whose reign, however, the post of grand hetairiarch was occupied at least from 1045 till 1050 by the eunuch Constantine, and Constantine X. An examination of the structure of the church may help us to make this choice.

Towards September 1065 Nicaea was shattered by a violent earthquake. This was

<sup>30</sup> The last verse, given as ΒΟΥΛΙΘΙΟ-ΚΥΡΟΣ ΕΝ ΠΕΔΩ by Hammer, is completed by Wulff (*Koimesiskirche*, 10) as βουλῇ τ(ὸ) κύρος ἐν πένδω [κρατεῖν] or βούλλη τ' ἐ[πε]κύρωσεν ἐν πένδω. Neither restitution fits the metre, but the general sense, viz. that the donation was confirmed or was to be considered as binding, seems acceptable.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the epithet ἡ οἰκοκυρά applied to the Pharos church of the Virgin in the Great Palace of Constantinople: Nikolaos Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Würzburg, 1907), 19<sup>23</sup>, 33<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> I have left in the Greek text the meaningless word τοδ' μων as it was transcribed by Wulff. Hammer read ΤΟΑΜΜΩΝ. Wulff himself prints the correction τοῖαν suggested to him by J. Smirnov.

<sup>33</sup> *Pour l'histoire de la féodalité byzantine*, trans. H. Grégoire and P. Lemerle (Brussels, 1954), 20 sq. The texts are Cedrenus, II, 645 and Zonaras, III, 670.

<sup>34</sup> Attaliates, 200–1. Cf. Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, 22 sq.; Skabalanovič, *Vizantijskoe gosudarstvo i cerkov' v XI veke* (St. Petersburg, 1884), 264; P. Charanis, "The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 4 (1948), 69. On *charistikia* and *pronoiai*, *ibid.*, 72 sq.

<sup>35</sup> On the career of Nikephoritzes see Guiland in *Etudes byzantines*, I (1943), 230–1.

actually the last of a series of shocks that occurred intermittently over a period of two years. The first quake occurred on September 23, 1063, and caused considerable damage in Constantinople and the coastal cities of the Propontis, especially at Cyzicus, where Hadrian's famous temple collapsed.<sup>36</sup> "After the two year period," writes Attaliates, "there having occurred an earthquake more violent than the repeated ones that had followed [*sc.* the first shock], but lesser than the first one, which was the greatest, Nicaea in Bithynia suffered a disastrous collapse and almost complete destruction. For its most famous and greatest churches, both the one dedicated to the Wisdom of God's Logos [*i.e.* St. Sophia] and serving as the metropolitan seat, and that of the Holy Fathers (where the Synod against Arius had been confirmed by the most-holy and orthodox fathers, and the true creed was proclaimed and shone forth brighter than the sun), were shaken and demolished; and the walls as well as private dwellings suffered the same fate. And from that day on, the quakes ceased."<sup>37</sup> In his study of the city-walls of Nicaea, A. M. Schneider has established that about twenty towers as well as stretches of wall between towers were damaged by the earthquake of 1065 and rebuilt in a very characteristic technique which he calls "verdeckte Schichttechnik" (fig. 5). Schneider has observed the same technique in the remains of the Dormition church, specifically in two massive piers which showed traces of the springing of arches. The lower part of these piers was built of normal brickwork (bricks 3.5 cm. thick; mortar joints 5 to 7 cm.), while the springing of the arches was in the "recessed brick technique," which led Schneider to conclude that the dome of the Dormition church and its supporting arches were rebuilt after the earthquake of 1065.<sup>38</sup>

Before discussing Schneider's statement, I should like to say a few words concerning the "verdeckte Schichttechnik." This system

of construction is readily identifiable by what appear to be disproportionately thick mortar joints (ranging from about 8 to 15 cm., the bricks being about 3 to 4 cm. thick). Actually, the pointing of this joint, which may be flush or slanted ("weathered"), conceals an intermediate course of brick which comes just short of the vertical surface.<sup>39</sup> Whenever the pointing is intact, the recessed course is naturally invisible, but its presence may be inferred with certainty if the joints are sufficiently thick. The same technique occurs also in arches.

The occurrence of the "recessed brick technique" is of great significance for purposes of dating, since its use appears to have been limited to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The greatest number of examples is to be found at Constantinople. We may note the following: substructures and various dependencies of St. George, Mangana, probably dating from the reign of Constantine IX (1042-55);<sup>40</sup> St. Mary Pammacaristos, central church and cistern under it (probably middle of the eleventh century);<sup>41</sup> ruins on top of the hill of the island of Antigoni (Burgaz), one of the Princes' Islands (probably middle of the eleventh century)<sup>42</sup> (fig. 6); monastery of the Chora (Kariye Camii), main church (*ca.* 1080); St. Saviour Pantepoptes (end of the eleventh century); the so-called "Prisons of Anemas" (*ca.* 1100);<sup>43</sup> St. Saviour Panto-

<sup>39</sup> See A. M. Schneider, *Byzanz*, *Istanbul Forschungen* 8 (Berlin, 1936), 14.

<sup>40</sup> R. Demangel and E. Mamboury, *Le quartier des Manges et la première région de Constantinople* (Paris, 1939), figs. 25, 26, 29, 30, 42, 47, 48.

<sup>41</sup> The presence of this technique was revealed when the interior was stripped of plaster in the course of restoration work carried out by the Byzantine Institute. For the cistern, see Aziz Ogan, "Fethiye Camii," *Belleten*, XIII (1949), pl. XLIII. The central church may perhaps be connected with the foundation of John Comnenus, curopalates and grand domestic (d. 1067). Cf. R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères (La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, I, 3 [Paris, 1953]), 217.

<sup>42</sup> See J. B. Papadopoulos, "Les ruines de l'île d'Antigoni," *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher*, V (1927), 86; Montfaucon, *Palaeographia graeca* (Paris, 1708), 52.

<sup>43</sup> B. Meyer-Plath and A. M. Schneider, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel*, II (Berlin, 1943), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Attaliates, 87-90; Cedrenus, II, 657; Zonaras, III, 679-80; Glycas, ed. Bonn, 605-6; Ephraem, ed. Bonn, 144.

<sup>37</sup> Attaliates, 90-1.

<sup>38</sup> A. M. Schneider and W. Karnapp, *Die Stadtmauer von Iznik (Nicaea)*, *Istanbul Forschungen* 9 (Berlin, 1938), 40-1.

crator (first half of the twelfth century) (fig. 7); portions of the walls of Manuel Comnenus at the Blachernae (ca. 1150);<sup>44</sup> Odalar Camii (twelfth century)<sup>45</sup> (fig. 8); St. Theodosia (Gül Camii), side apses;<sup>46</sup> church at Aya Kapı;<sup>47</sup> Sekbanbaşı Mescidi, wrongly identified with the monastery of Kyra Martha;<sup>48</sup> a ruined church near the village of Bostancik on the Asiatic shore of the Sea of Marmora,<sup>49</sup> etc. In Nicaea, in addition to the city walls and the Dormition church, we find this technique in the apse of St. Sophia, a repair that has also been connected with the earthquake of 1065,<sup>50</sup> and in the ruins of another church.<sup>51</sup> The recessed brick technique is also found outside the immediate neighborhood of Constantinople; in fact, the earliest dated examples come from Kiev, where this type of construction must have been introduced by builders from the Byzantine capital. We find it in the added ambulatory of the Tithe church (*Desjatinnaia Cerkov'*) (ca. 1039),<sup>52</sup> in St. Sophia (1037–46), the Golden Gate (1037),<sup>53</sup> the church of the Vydubickij monastery (1070–88),<sup>54</sup> the church Spas na Berestove (late eleventh or early twelfth century),<sup>55</sup> the ruins of a church on the property of the Kiev Institute of Art, excavated in 1947 (second

half of the eleventh century),<sup>56</sup> as well as in the Spaso-Preobraženskij cathedral of Černigov (ca. 1036), the cathedral of St. Sophia at Polotsk (second half of the eleventh century), the church of SS. Boris and Gleb also at Polotsk (early twelfth century),<sup>57</sup> etc. In fact, until about the middle of the twelfth century, the recessed brick technique was the dominant type of construction in Kievan Russia. Outside of Russia, we find this technique in the restorations made by Constantine IX in the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem (1048),<sup>58</sup> in the monastery of Nerezi (1164), and in the church of St. Nicholas at Kuršumlja in Serbia (1168) (fig. 9), which has been recognized as a monument of almost pure Constantinopolitan style.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the recessed brick technique may be considered as a hallmark of Constantinopolitan architecture, introduced early in the eleventh century and used until the end of the twelfth. To my knowledge, it is not found outside of these chronological limits. The theory of an Anatolian origin, proposed by Brunov,<sup>60</sup> may be safely discarded since, with the exception of Nicaea and a ruined church, probably of the twelfth century, at Kurşunlu in Bithynia (on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmora),<sup>61</sup> this technique does not appear to have been found in Anatolia.

If we now examine the extant photographs of the Dormition church, we can easily recognize the two systems of construction noted by Schneider. The apse and bema, and possibly also the east walls of the projecting rooms attached to the north and south ends of the narthex, were built of normal brickwork. According to Schmit's measurements,<sup>62</sup> which agree with Schneider's, the bricks were

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> N. Brunov, "Die Odalar-Djami von Konstantinopel," *BZ*, XXVI (1926), 360; P. Schazmann in *Atti del V Congresso Intern. di Studi Biz.*, II (1940), 376.

<sup>46</sup> Brunov, "Die Gül-Djami von Konstantinopel," *BZ*, XXX (1929/30), 560; *id.*, "Rapport sur un voyage à Constantinople," *Rev. des études grecques*, XXXIX (1926), 20–1.

<sup>47</sup> Schneider, *Byzanz*, 53 and fig. 11.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 63. Cf. V. Laurent, "Kyra Martha," *Echos d'Orient*, XXXVIII (1939), 296–320.

<sup>49</sup> Brunov, "Une église monastique aux environs de Chalcédoine," *Echos d'Orient*, XXVI (1927), 35.

<sup>50</sup> Brunov, "L'église de Sainte-Sophie de Nicée," *Echos d'Orient*, XXIV (1925), 474; A. M. Schneider, *Die römischen und byzantinischen Denkmäler von Iznik-Nicaea*, Istanbul Forschungen 16 (Berlin, 1943), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Semavi Eyice, "Iznik'de bir Bizans kilisesi," *Belleten*, XIII (1949), 39 and pl. xvii, fig. 6.

<sup>52</sup> M. K. Karger, *Archeologičeskie issledovanija drevnego Kieva* (Kiev, 1951), 64–5, 79 and fig. 51.

<sup>53</sup> Akademija Nauk SSSR, *Istorija russkogo iskusstva*, I (Moscow, 1953), 127.

<sup>54</sup> Karger, *op. cit.*, 147 and fig. 111.

<sup>55</sup> *Istorija russkogo iskusstva*, I, 142–3.

<sup>56</sup> Karger, *op. cit.*, 223.

<sup>57</sup> *Istorija russkogo iskusstva*, I, 319.

<sup>58</sup> H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, 1–2 (Paris, 1914), fig. 97; W. Harvey, *Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem*, (Oxford, 1935), fig. 68.

<sup>59</sup> G. Millet, *L'ancien art serbe. Les églises* (Paris, 1919), 52–54; J. Ebersolt, *Monuments d'architecture byzantine* (Paris, 1934), pl. viii, 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Rev. des études grecques*, XXXIX (1926), 21; *BZ*, XXVI (1926), 361.

<sup>61</sup> M. Ramazanoğlu, "Eine kleine Kirche in Bithynien," *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Θ' Διεθνoῦς Βυζαντινολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, I (Athens, 1955), 441 and pl. 109.

<sup>62</sup> *Die Koimesis-Kirche*, 5.

32 by 3.5–4 cm., while the mortar joints were 5 to 7 cm. thick. The recessed brick technique is, on the other hand, clearly indicated by the excessive thickness of the joints in the dome base (fig. 11) (the dome itself was rebuilt in 1807), and in both the north and south tympana. This may be observed in the brick mullions of the triple window and in the characteristically recessed arch of the tympanum of the south side (fig. 12), and on the north side as well, though not as clearly.<sup>63</sup> Thus the dome and its supporting arches must have been rebuilt following some serious damage to the church, and since the technique employed in the restoration is limited to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is reasonable to assume that this damage was caused by the disastrous earthquake of 1065.

Now, the west façade of the narthex was built in precisely the same technique as the dome base and tympana, and had recessed arches similar to those of the tympana. The very thick joints are clearly visible on Wulff's photograph of the entrance into the narthex (fig. 13) as well as on another photograph of the west façade that does not appear to have been published heretofore (fig. 10). We may therefore conclude that the narthex was rebuilt at the same time as the dome base and tympana, hence after 1065. The plastic treatment of the west façade with its wall arcades formed by several recessed archivolt (fig. 14) and its rounded niches within which the bricks are arranged in a fan-like pattern, is also indicative of the eleventh century, and may be compared to Kilise Camii and St. Saviour Pantepoptes at Constantinople, Kazancilar Camii at Salonica, St. Sophia at Kiev, etc. In fact, the plastic decoration of the façade is enough to prove that this part of the building is much later than the original pre-iconoclastic church, notwithstanding Schmit's assertion of the contrary.<sup>64</sup> If,

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 2 and pls. 1 and 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Schmit states that the façade wall of the narthex was contemporary with the katholikon because it was not parallel to the east wall of the narthex, but was exactly parallel to the east wall of the church. I am unable to see the cogency of this argument, since the façade wall was probably rebuilt along its original line, and besides the discrepancy involved is quite negligible. Wulff also regarded the

however, it is true that the façade wall was rebuilt after 1065, then the narthex mosaics could not have been earlier. In this connection we may note the differences in the corbels on which the arches on either side of the domical vault of the narthex rested (fig. 4); the pair flanking the entrance into the *naos* were similar to one another, whereas those set into the west wall were quite different, the one to the south having a moulded profile with two fillets, while the one to the north had a plain bevelled face. The dissimilarity of these corbels was noted by Wulff,<sup>65</sup> who quite correctly concluded that they were inserted in connection with a rebuilding (Wulff thought in terms merely of a remodelling of the central bay) in the eleventh century.

In conclusion, I should like to suggest that the monastery of the Theotokos to which the Koimesis church belonged was given to the patrician Nicephorus as a *pronoia*-grant by the Emperor Constantine X (1059–67). In the earthquake of 1065 part of the church collapsed, and Nicophorus rebuilt the dome and its supporting arches as well as the west façade (these are probably the *κτίσματα* mentioned in the inscription). It is possible that other parts of the church, e.g. the north and south walls, were restored at the same time, but in the absence of photographs or a detailed description of the masonry this cannot be determined. The narthex mosaics date from the same period, and since the "ktetoric" mosaic appears to have represented Constantine X as the reigning emperor, they must have been executed between 1065 and 1067. I must add that this conclusion is not entirely new. In fact, Diehl, whose incautious suggestion made in 1892 led to the adoption of the date 1025–28, later changed his mind concerning the date of the narthex mosaics. In a postscript to the revised version of his original article, published in 1905, he calls attention to the earthquake in the reign of Constantine X, and remarks: "On peut se

façade wall of the narthex as part of the original structure. See the sketch-plan in his *Bibliographisch-kritischer Nachtrag zu altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst* (Potsdam, 1936), 57, fig. 541.

<sup>65</sup> "Architektura i mozaiki," 333; *Die Koimesiskirche*, 29. Wulff is mistaken in saying that three of the corbels were alike.

demander si, après un tel désastre, l'église de la Κοίμησις aussi n'eut point besoin d'être restaurée, et si le grand hétériarque Nicéphore, qui vivait, nous le savons par l'inscription signalée plus haut, sous un empereur Constantin, ne doit pas en conséquence être reporté, lui et son oeuvre, à la seconde moitié du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle."<sup>66</sup> Later on, Diehl seems to have adopted this latter alternative, since in his *Manuel d'art byzantin*<sup>67</sup> he says without any further explanation: "Les mosaïques qui décorent le narthex appartiennent . . . certainement au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, et le grand hétériarque Nicéphore, qui les fit exécuter, vivait sans doute sous Constantin X (1059-1067)."

In the above demonstration I have refrained from mentioning any consideration of style, since our knowledge of eleventh-century mural decoration is not sufficiently detailed to provide exact chronological criteria; for example, the fact that the narthex mosaics of Nicaea are less linear than those of St. Sophia at Kiev does not necessarily imply an earlier date. I should like, however, to mention one further consideration which may have some significance. On the eastern piers of the Dormition church were two mosaic "icons" that have been published by Schmit. They represented Christ with the unusual epithet ὁ Ἀντιφωνητής and the Virgin *Eleousa*. These mosaics have been dated in the tenth or eleventh century and, although direct proof is lacking, it is quite likely that they were contemporary with the narthex mosaics.<sup>68</sup> The epithet Antiphonetes is not mentioned in the *Painter's Guide*,<sup>69</sup> and was exceedingly rare in Byzantine iconography; in fact, the only other instance of which I am aware is a fresco of the fourteenth or fifteenth century in the

basilica of St. Demetrius at Salonica.<sup>70</sup> The original Antiphonetes icon was kept in the church of St. Mary Chalkoprateia at Constantinople, and was associated with a famous legend, found in numerous manuscripts of the eleventh and later centuries, concerning the Jewish moneylender Abraham and the merchant Theodore.<sup>71</sup> It is difficult to tell in what period the Chalkoprateia icon acquired a certain measure of celebrity, since the Abraham legend (which, in part, may go back to the seventh century) was not originally concerned with it; in fact, the association with the Chalkoprateia is made only in the title of the legend as found in our manuscripts.<sup>72</sup> However that may be, the cult of Christos Antiphonetes was popularized by the empress Zoe (d. 1050). Psellus, in his account of Constantine IX, relates under the heading περὶ τοῦ Ἀντιφωνητοῦ that Zoe had a precious icon of Christ which by slight changes in the color of its complexion forewarned her of the future: when the Lord's face appeared pale, that portended disaster, when it looked rosy, that was a good omen.<sup>73</sup> Zoe also built a church of Christ Antiphonetes in which she was buried.<sup>74</sup> One may be tempted to suppose, therefore, that the appearance of this unusual epithet at Nicaea had some connection with the patronage extended to Christos Antiphonetes by the Empress Zoe, and to consider this as a further confirmation of the date suggested here for the mosaics.

<sup>70</sup> G. A. and M. G. Soteriou, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης (Athens, 1952), 209 (not illustrated).

<sup>71</sup> On this legend see esp. Nelson and Starr, "The Legend of the Divine Surety and the Jewish Moneylender," *Ann. de l'Inst. de Phil. et d'Hist. Orient. et Slaves*, VII (1944), 289-338.

<sup>72</sup> I have discussed the history of the Antiphonetes icon in a study entitled *The Brazen House*, to be published by the Royal Danish Academy in *Arkæologisk-kunsthistoriske Meddelelser*, IV, 4 (1959).

<sup>73</sup> *Chronogr.*, ed. Renauld, I (Paris, 1926), 149-50.

<sup>74</sup> Sathas, *Bibl. graeca medii aevi*, VII, 163. Cf. Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, 520. There is also a monastery *tou Antiphonitou*, probably of the twelfth century, near Kyrenia, Cyprus. See G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1918), 336-8; G. A. Soteriou, Τὰ βυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Κύπρου, I (Athens, 1935), fig. 14, pls. 24 and 59b.

<sup>66</sup> *Etudes byzantines*, 369, note 1. G. Millet in A. Michel's *Histoire de l'art*, I, 1 (Paris, 1905), 196 also states that the church of the Dormition was restored after 1065, but he incorrectly applies this date to the mosaics of the presbytery.

<sup>67</sup> 2nd ed. (Paris, 1926), 521.

<sup>68</sup> So Lazarev, *Istorija vizantijskoj živopisi*, I, 307, note 47.

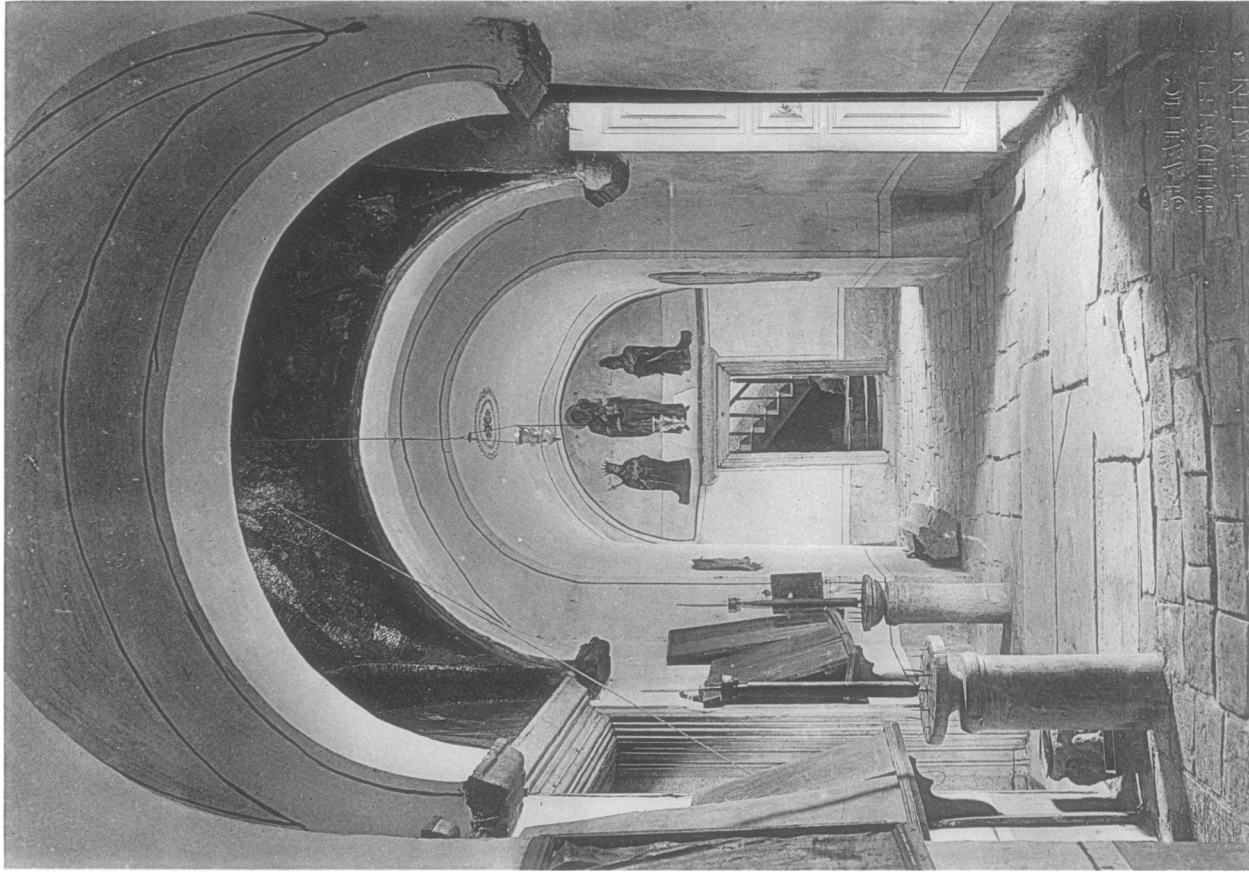
<sup>69</sup> Dionysius of Fournia, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1909), 227, 281.



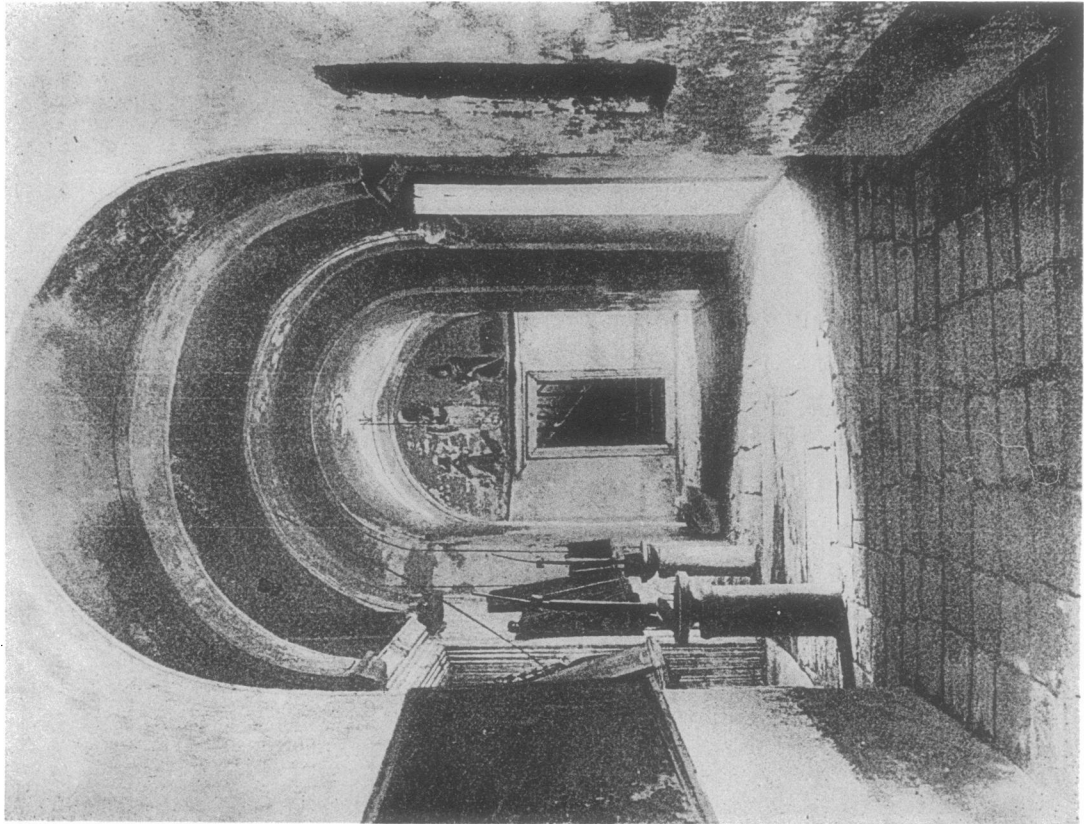
1. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. Narthex, Vault Mosaic



2. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. Narthex, Lunette over Central Door



4.

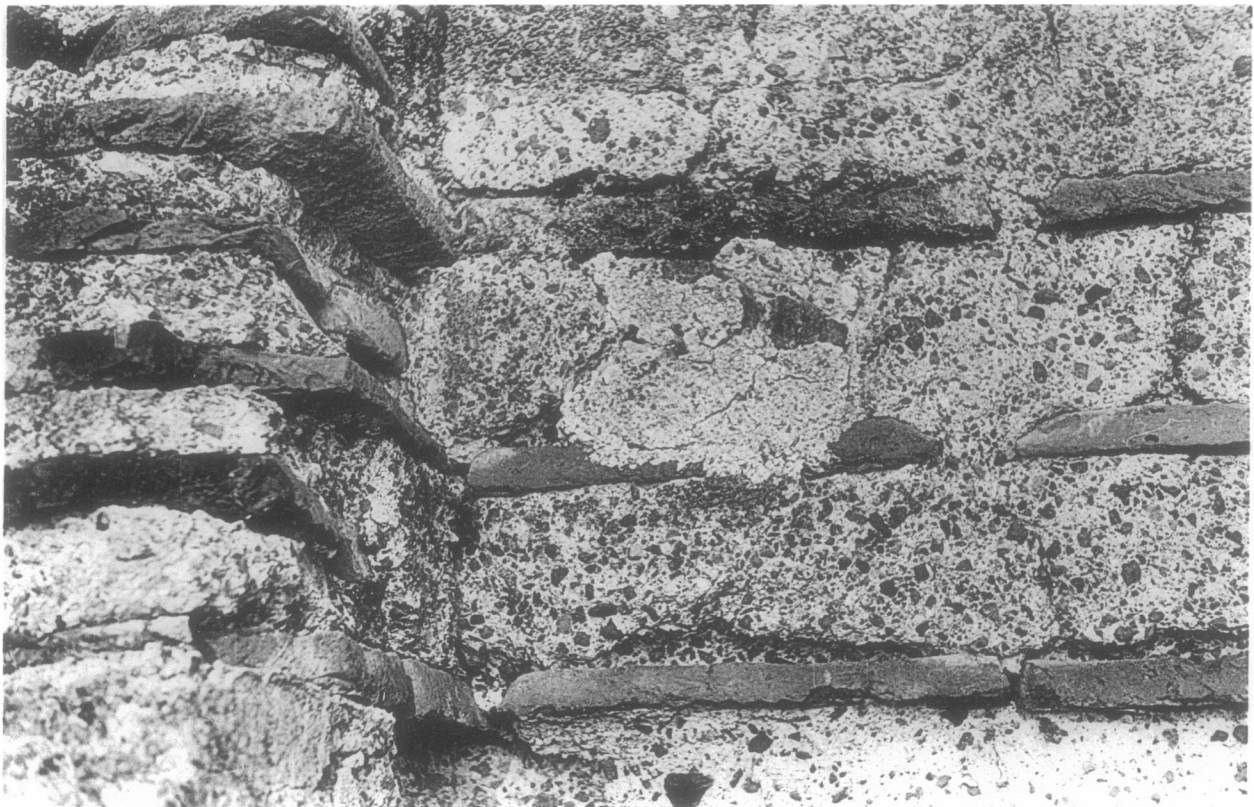


3.

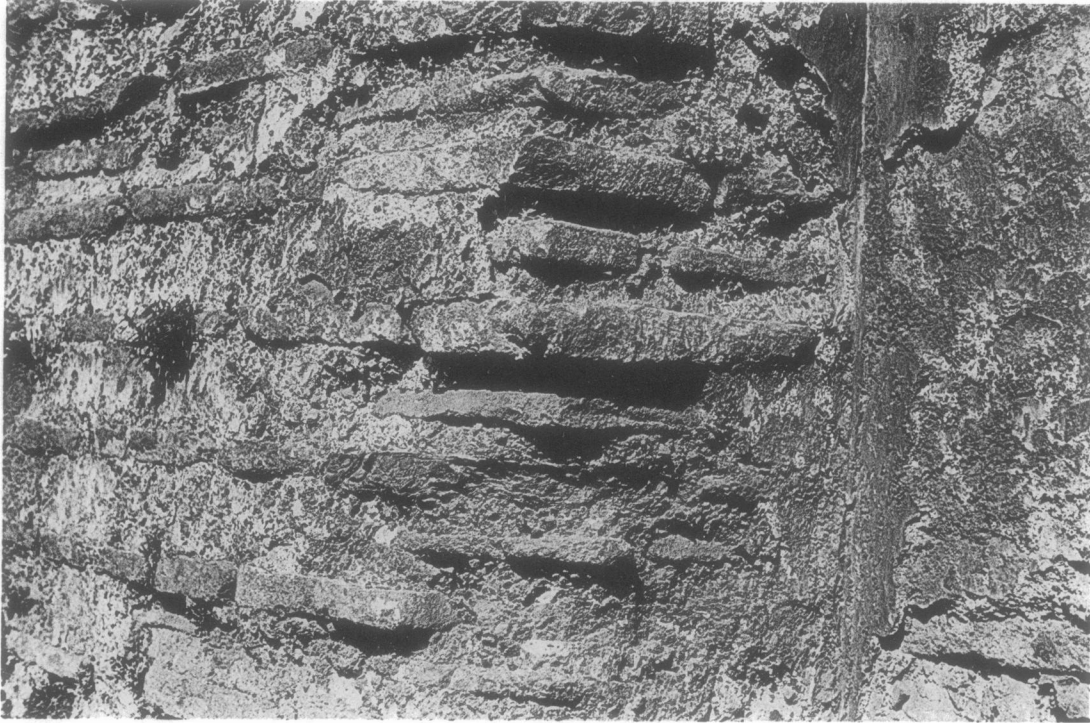
Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. Narthex, looking South



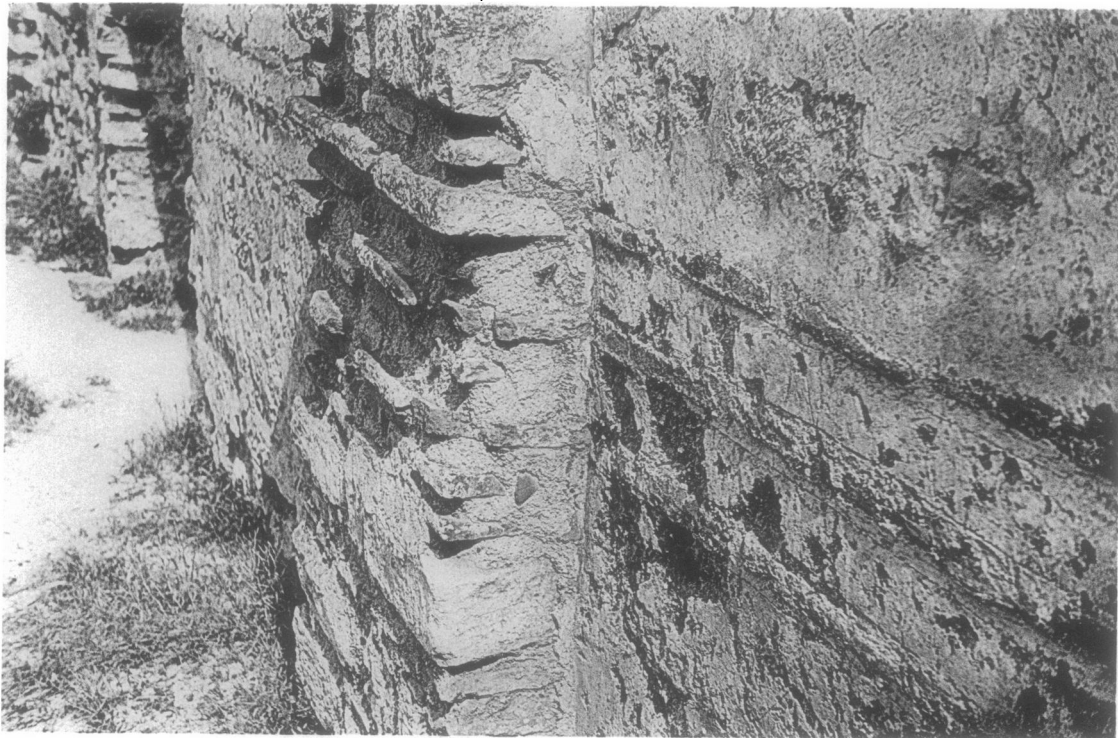
5. Nicaea, City Walls. Detail of Tower



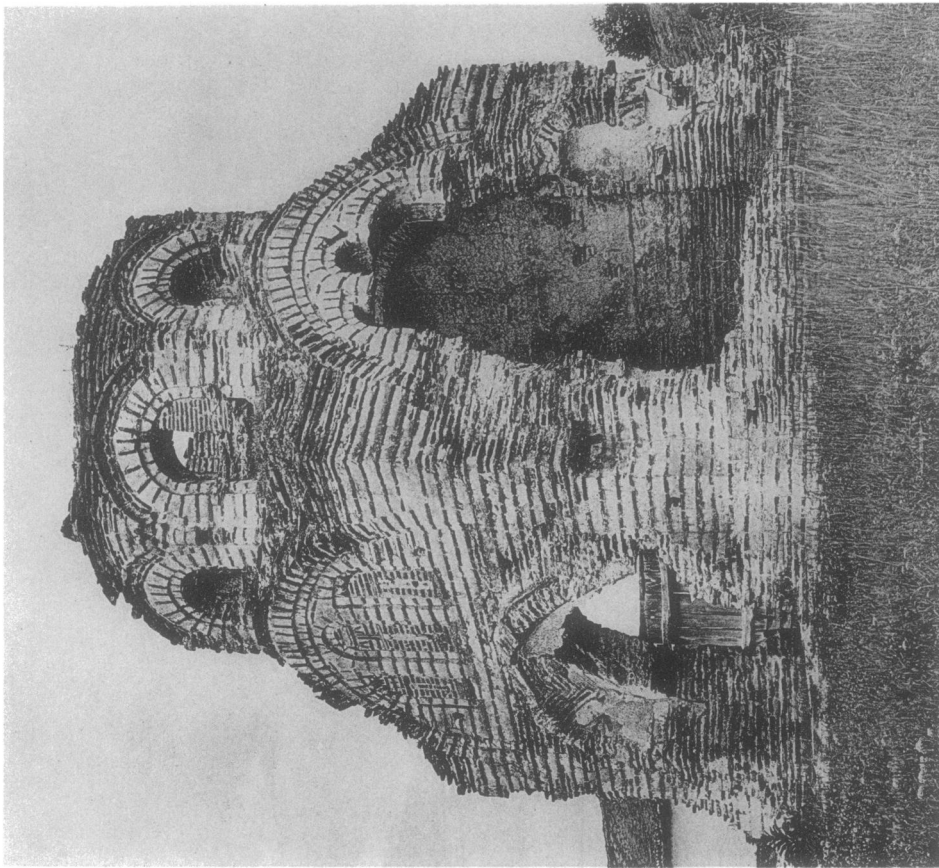
6. Island of Antigoni (Burgaz), Byzantine Ruin, detail



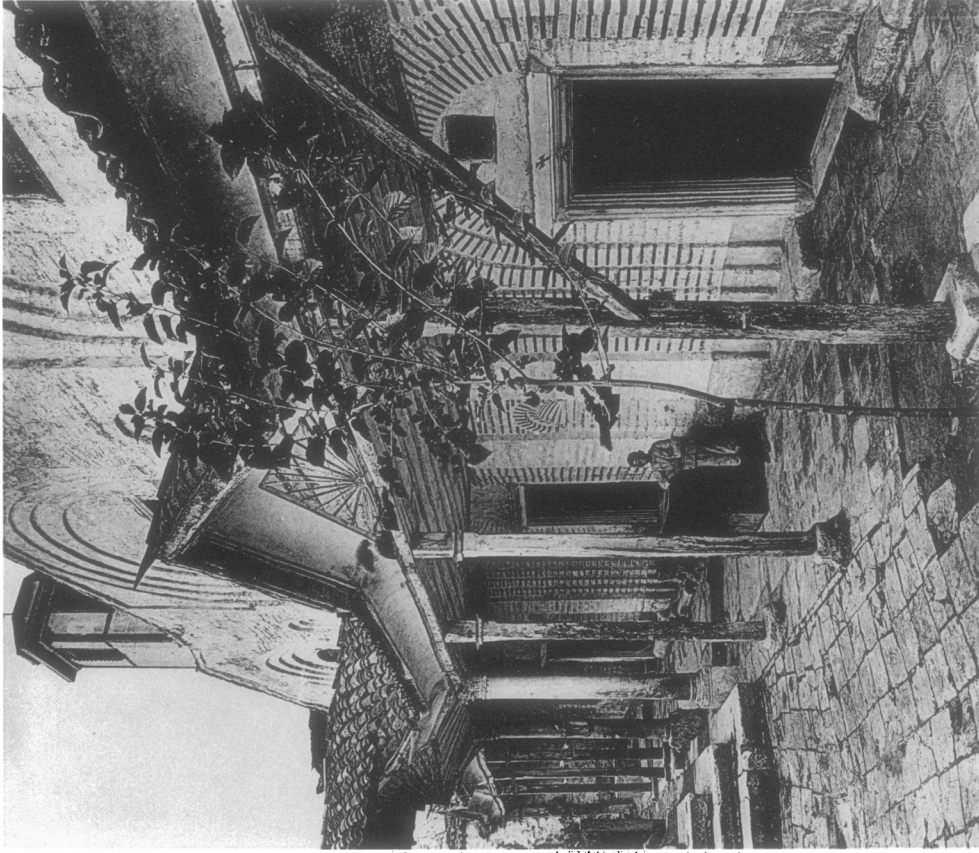
7. Constantinople, St. Saviour Pantocrator, West Façade, detail



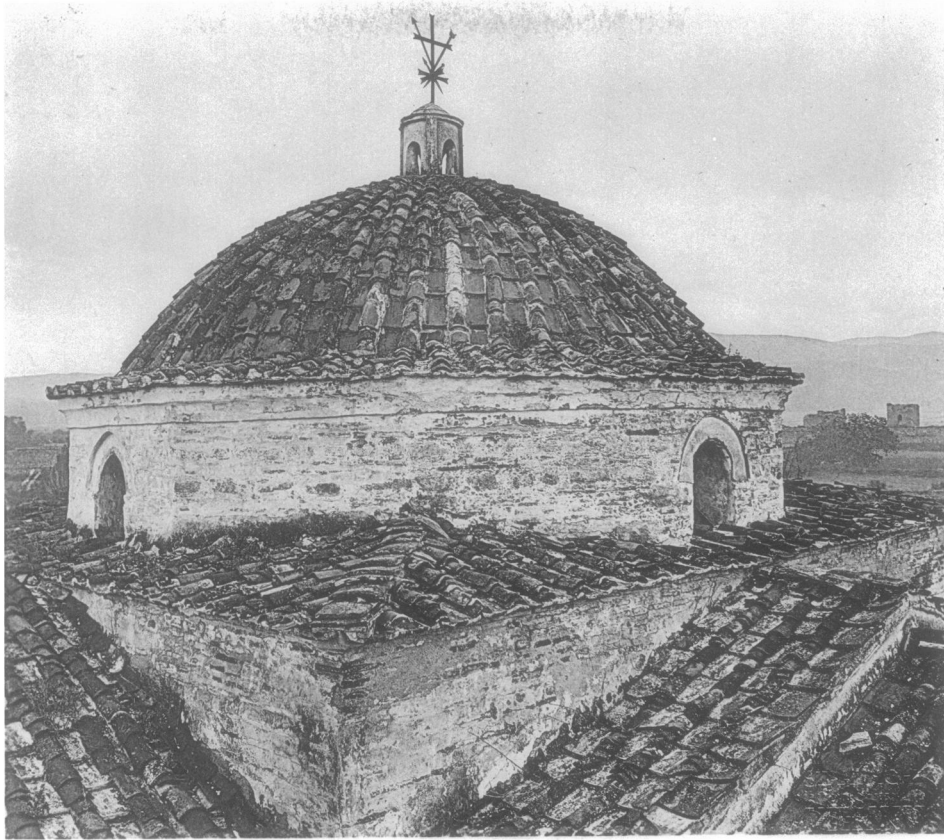
8. Constantinople, Odalar Camii. Detail of Brickwork



9. Kuršumlija, Church of St. Nicholas



10. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. West Façade



11. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. Dome



12. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. View from Southeast



13. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition. West Façade, Central Door



14. Nicaea, Church of the Dormition, West Façade